**Trip Report to Africa RISING Sites in Tanzania: 9-14 April 2014**

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***of the SC Africa RISING Project for ESA***

**Key contacts made/targets met**

This field trip to the Africa RISING projects in Tanzania was undertaken in my capacity as the Chairperson of the Steering Committee (SC) of this program for ESA. Dr Ivan Rwomushana of ASRECA, also a member of the SC took part in the field tour. During this trip we met with several persons including the Africa RISING team managing the project sites of Babati district (Mr Ngule Festo of IITA Arusha) and that of Kongwa district (Mr Swai of ARI Hombolo). We also met the Regional Commissioner of Manyara Region (Hon Eraston Mbwilo), the Town Council Director of the Babati district who is also working with 2000 Youths (Mr Mkombole Omari), the leaders of the Africa RISING project (Dr Irmgard and Prof Mateete). We also met many farmers in their farms in the villages visited.

**Actual outcomes**

We participated in a two-day workshop held in Babati town that led to the creation of the Babati R4D platform. We then visited research sites in the following villages over two additional days:

- for Babati district: Long Village (high altitude about 2100m and high rainfall) with IITA sites on Participatory Varietal Selection - PVS on maize, soil fertility, and crop management trials, CIAT sites on climbing beans, ILRI sites on livestock fodder, and IITA postharvest with Supergrain bag). The second site, Berni in Seloto Village (medium altitude about 1600m and high rainfall), houses CIMMYT research sites on Maize Necrotic Lethal disease;

- for Kongwa district: Laikala Village (low altitude about 1400m) with ICRAF agroforestry trials, and ICRISAT PVS on sorghum, millet, pigeon pea and groundnut). The second site, Moleti Village (same ecological conditions as above) where other ICRAF agroforestry trials, ICRISAT PVS and soil fertility trials take place

**Lessons**

The goal of this trip was to take stock of the on-going and planned R4D activities in the Africa RISING sites for reporting to the next SC of the program. The energy with which the R4D platform was embraced and the commitment of members on the platform coupled with political support is encouraging and should ensure sustainability. The visit to research sites was very informative; farmers are providing their land for the trials, participate in trial management and enable access to the sites for others to observe and learn and through field days as the dissemination pathway. We observed well maintained experiments under farmers' conditions and we witnessed the enthusiastic participation of beneficiaries (farmers). The farmers can clearly see the differences between local practices and the demonstrated technologies and seem to suggest they will take up the most appropriate for their system. The role of the R4D platform in scaling up acceptable technologies is envisaged. We also got a better understanding of how the voucher system works as a means of disseminating technology; in one case, the enthusiasm of the farmer to continue with the technology at own cost was noted. Farmers clearly see the difference between traditional and improved storage practices to counter post harvest losses and there is a clear recognition that the minimal investment in modern grain storage bags makes economic sense. The MLN disease will require an integrated approach to be countered over the longer term. The innovativeness of the project in involving farmers in PVS as a pathway to enhance adoption was noted. It was sobering for the farmers to observe the neighbouring fields and compare with the improved varieties they have on offer. The challenge of access to seed of preferred varieties is envisaged as it plays a key role in technology adoption.

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***Ms Lucia Lulu, farmer at Long village displays maize variety/soil fertility demonstration***



***Difference between storage in Super grain bag (left) safe and farmers practice (right) already infested by insects at Long village***

**Recommendations**

In general, the integration of research components at a given site seems to be performing quite well and it is achieved. However integration among sites still needs to be improved as each CG Center is operating separately at their research sites.

Building and strengthening strategic partnerships with other organisations to complement efforts is further encouraged. For instance, ASARECA is currently implementing a scoping study, which could lead to an Integrated Seed Sector Programme for Tanzania, to address enhanced access to seed of farmer-preferred varieties. ASARECA has made deliberate effort to involve Africa RISING in the conceptualization phase.

The IITA new Pan African initiative on Youths in Agriculture if successful should be encouraged to include Babati district that has already initiated agricultural activities on youths on their own initiative.